

HARDLIFE HERALD

Newsletter of the 385th Bombardment Group
Association



548th



549th

550th



551st



1942 - 1945 Great Ashfield - Suffolk, England Station 155 - The Mighty Eighth

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385th BGA REUNION - ST. LOUIS, MO - OCTOBER 2019

HARDLIFE HERALD

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Check us out online:

www.385thBGA.com

www.facebook.com/385thBGA

Front Cover: 42-38160 "Lonesome Polecat"

Back Cover: being recovered/repared from Lake Zug

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Franz Stigler, Charlie Brown and My Dad - by Tom Gagnon

December, 1943: A badly damaged American bomber struggles to fly over wartime Germany. At the controls is twenty-one-year-old Second Lieutenant Charlie Brown. Half his crew lay wounded or dead on this, their first mission. Suddenly, a Messerschmitt fighter pulls up on the bomber's tail. The pilot is German ace Franz Stigler—and he can destroy the young American crew with the squeeze of a trigger.

He was about to fire when he hesitated. Stigler was baffled. No one in the bomber fired at him. He looked closer at the tail gunner. He was still, his white fleece collar soaked with blood. Stigler craned his neck to examine the rest of the bomber. Its skin had been peeled away by shells, its guns knocked out. He could see men huddled inside the plane tending the wounds of other crewmen.

Then he nudged his plane alongside the bomber's wings and locked eyes with the pilot whose eyes were wide with shock and horror.

Stigler pressed his hand over the rosary he kept in his flight jacket. He eased his index finger off the trigger. He couldn't shoot. It would be murder. He recalled the words of one of his commanding officers from during his time fighting in North Africa: "If I ever see or hear of you shooting at a man in a parachute, I will shoot you myself." Stigler later commented, "To me, it was just like they were in a parachute. I saw them and I couldn't shoot them down." Instead, he escorted the damaged bomber to the English Channel, saluted and returned to his base.

40 years later, Franz Stigler and Charlie Brown would reunite and become fast friends.

My dad (a B-17 pilot with 36 combat missions) had the opportunity to meet Franz Stigler at a reception at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in the 1990s. Stigler and Charlie Brown were guests and featured speakers.

Relating his experience to me, Dad noted that he had an extended conversation with Stigler covering much more than the Charlie Brown episode. Dad came away impressed with Stigler and, more importantly, with the realization that they both had a lot in common. Both served their countries during the war; both admitted to being scared sh*tless at times during combat; neither wanted to nor took any pleasure from inflicting death and destruction on their counterparts; both had family they treasured; etc.. Dad realized, somewhat to his surprise, that he LIKED Franz Stigler. Dad later told me that night he finally "signed his personal peace treaty with Germany." I knew that he still had nightmares for years after the war on the anniversary dates of his toughest missions (PTSD, I believe) and he told me he remembered vividly German fighter pilots doing their level-best to kill him and his crew. All these years after the war, he still harbored hostility towards the Germans he had fought. He said that night after talking with Stigler, something shifted for him and he realized he no longer hated the Germans he had fought. There is no formal record in any official archives, but Dad finally signed his "personal peace treaty" that night.

Due, in no small part, to Franz Stigler.

"Welcome to St Louis, MO

45th Annual 8th Air Force Historical Society 'Reunion



Sights of St. Louis (City Tour) **Thursday, October 17, 2019**

Sit back and enjoy the amazing sights of St. Louis as your guide expertly traces the history of St. Louis beginning with the city's original settlement, Laclede's Landing. It is now a nine-block historic district filled with renovated turn-of-the-century buildings housing shops, eateries and offices.

We will visit the famous Gateway Arch, the Nation's tallest monument, which commemorates the gateway to the west for thousands of 19th century pioneers. We'll take a tram ride to the top of this 630' stainless steel architectural wonder and get a unique, bird's-eye view of St. Louis. If you're not quite up to those heights, you can enjoy "*Monument to the Dream*," the film documenting the construction of the Arch.

Enjoy the view of Old Cathedral, the oldest cathedral west of the Mississippi. Across the street is the Old Courthouse, the setting for cases involving slavery, the fur trade and equal rights. Of these cases, the Dred Scott Freedom Trial is perhaps the most notable. We will pass Busch Stadium, home of the 2011 World Champion St. Louis Cardinals. Continuing west on Market Street, we will pass several of St. Louis' civic buildings and plazas, as well as Citygarden, a unique urban oasis blending art, architecture and landscape. St. Louis Union Station, once the busiest rail terminal in the world, has undergone a magnificent renovation and is home to a luxury hotel and restaurants.

At the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis, also known

as the New Cathedral, we will see one of the largest collections of mosaics in the world—84,000 square feet in 8,000 shades of tiny pieces of color! The tiny pieces of tesserae and glass portray scenes from both the Old and New Testaments, the life of Saint Louis IX, King of France, and many men and women prominent in the history of St. Louis.

9:00am board bus, 2:00pm back at hotel.
\$65/Person includes bus, guide, and gratuities.
BOX LUNCH INCLUDED!

Keep the Memory Alive Tour **Friday, October 18, 2019**

Boeing James S McDonnell Prologue Room

At our first stop on this experience, we will learn the history of the Boeing Company and the companies with which it shares a common heritage paralleling the excit-



ing history of humankind learning to fly. The men and women of the Boeing Company and the aircraft they have built—from the first cloth-and-wood airplanes to today's sleekest fighters and jetliners—have played a pivotal role in shaping the history of aerospace. The James S. McDonnell Prologue Room in St. Louis tells this panoramic story of nearly eight decades of aviation progress, from biplanes to bombers to space travel. Scale models, dioramas, paintings, and photographs depict such important events as the first flight around the world in 1924, the first take off of a jet fighter from a US Navy carrier in 1946, the first aircraft to land at the South Pole in 1956, and the first manned spacecraft to orbit the Earth in 1962.

Holocaust Museum and Learning Center

Our next stop is the Holocaust Museum and Learning Center. The work at the Learning Center focuses on building a community of defenders. Even in the face of



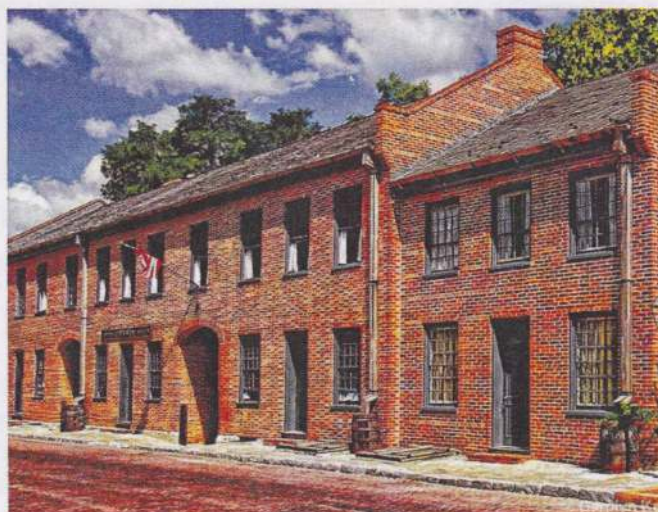
this world's history of genocidal injustices perpetrated in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and most recently, Darfur, we cannot lose hope that the next generation will hear, understand, feel compassion, and take action to end such tragedies.

The museum contains eight different installations that you can wind your way through. Begin at the Introductory Room which contains pre-World War II photographs of the survivors who immigrated to St. Louis, continuing through the Rise of Nazism in Germany among many other exhibits.

9:30am board bus, 1:30pm back at hotel
\$26/Person includes bus, guide, and gratuities.
Lunch/snacks on your own.

Sights and Shops in St. Charles Tour
Saturday, October 19, 2019

Enjoy a visit to St. Charles, the oldest town on the Missouri River. Founded as Les Petites Cotes (The March 2019 (19-1)



Little Hills) by French Canadians, St. Charles has carefully preserved its heritage as a river town that has been welcoming visitors since 1769. Thousands of pioneers replenished supplies here on the awesome journey west. St. Charles is a source of multiple historical encounters: the Lewis and Clark Rendezvous, Missouri's First State Capitol, and the origin of the Boone's Lick Trail. We'll take a driving tour of Main Street—a nine block historic district filled with 80 restored buildings dating from 1790 to 1900. This cobblestone street is known for its array of gift, antique and craft shops.

If you wish, you will have time to explore Missouri's First State Capitol* or the Lewis & Clark Nature Center* on your own during this tour. The Capitol has been completely restored and furnished as it appeared during the period of 1821-1826 when the Missouri State Legislature met in St. Charles. The lower level of the Nature Center houses replicas of the three boats of the Lewis & Clark Discovery Expedition. Upstairs, the Nature Center is a "hands-on" museum following the adventures of Lewis and Clark into the wilderness of the West. Take in the various displays of Native American tribes, the men of the expedition with their equipment and artifacts, and a walk through the forest as it was during Lewis and Clark's expedition.

12:00pm board bus, 4:00pm back at hotel.
\$26/Person includes bus, guide, and gratuities.
Lunch is on your own.**

**If you wish to visit the First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site, admission is \$4.50/Person and is NOT included in the cost of this tour.*
Also, you may choose to visit the Lewis & Clark Boat House and Nature Center, admission is \$5.00/Person and again, is NOT included in the cost of this tour.
****A list of restaurants will be provided for your convenience.**



45th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St Louis, MO

October 16-20, 2019

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

STOP!

o RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM FIRST!

The reunion hotel has a liberal cancellation policy—in the event you are unable to attend the reunion, you will be able to cancel your reservation without penalty within 48 hours of your scheduled check-in time. However, if you wait until the last minute to book your room reservation, you may not receive the reunion rate or rooms may no longer be available at the reunion hotel. Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that our vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less a \$5 processing fee.

Canceling your hotel reservation does NOT cancel your reunion activities.

o COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM

Please fill out the registration form completely.

- => Fill out your name as you wish it to be on your name tag—and for any others registering with you. If you are a WWII veteran, and/or affiliated with a bomb or fighter group, please indicate which group.
- => ALL meals are priced separately—INCLUDING breakfast. Make sure to indicate [X] on your registration sheet which mornings you want breakfast and the total # of people on your registration sheet who will be having breakfast on each day. Be sure and select your entree if you plan on attending the Saturday evening gala.
- => There are three [3] tour options available during the reunion. Please read the information [here in this issue] on each tour and then make your selection on the form. **The Sights of St Louis Tour INCLUDES a box lunch.**

o MAIL IN YOUR REGISTRATION FORM

Once you have completed your registration form, please total up the amount owed and include a check, money order, or complete the credit card information on the form, payable to the **8th AFHS** and mail to:

**8th AFHS
68 Kimberlys Way
Jasper, GA 30143-4769**

Or you may **SCAN** your registration form [if paying by credit card] and **EMAIL** to:

ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

ALL registration forms **MUST** be received by **September 25, 2019** in order to guarantee your place. If you have any questions or problems in completing your registration, please contact:

**Debra Kujawa
Managing Director
8th AFHS
912-748-8884**

ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

ALL reunion information and forms are available on our website: 8thAFHS.org



45th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO
October 16-20, 2019

HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION

888-627-7066 or *ONLINE* registration on our website!

(Reference Sheraton Westport 'CHALET' and 8th AIR FORCE for group rate)

Location

The Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet is located in Westport Plaza, (191 Westport Plaza, St. Louis, MO 63146) which features 18 shops, popular restaurants, and entertainment venues like the Westport Playhouse, The Funny Bone Comedy Club, Jive and Wail Piano Bar, and Backstreet Jazz and Blues. Guests will enjoy convenient access to popular destinations and attractions. We're located just 10 minutes from historic St. Charles, 15 minutes from Forest Park, home of the Saint Louis Zoo, Science Center, Art Museum and the History Museum. We're also close to the world-famous Gateway Arch, the St. Louis Cardinals baseball stadium, Six Flags® and Missouri's Wine Country.

Shuttle Service

For those of you flying into St. Louis, there is complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport to the hotel. Go to Baggage Claim/Hotel Shuttle exits—the shuttle runs every half hour.

Upscale Amenities

Enjoy complimentary wireless High Speed Internet in all public areas, concierge service, plus signature amenities you'll only find at Sheraton. Wake up energized after a restful night's sleep in a plush Sheraton Sweet Sleeper® Bed. Sheraton Club rooms and suites provide guests with special access to the Sheraton Club Lounge, offering complimentary breakfast, evening hors d'oeuvres, and a variety of beverage options. Stay connected at our lobby's connectivity hub, the Link@Sheraton™ experience with Microsoft®. Stay fit with a visit to our Sheraton Fitness center, programmed by Core Performance™.

Dining Options Abound

The Terrace Restaurant and Lucerne Restaurant feature a wide variety of menu items served in a friendly, casual atmosphere. There is also a private dining area perfect for intimate gatherings. In the summer, enjoy poolside refreshments every weekend at the Tiki Bar, serving snacks, beer, wine and frozen drinks. We also offer guests the convenience and privacy of in-room dining service. Stroll through the Westport Plaza Complex and visit any one of their many casual and fine-dining options, from seafood restaurants to specialty cafes.

RESERVATION INFORMATION

Group Name: 8th Air Force Historical Society

Reunion Dates: October 16-20, 2019

Rate: \$122 + tax (currently 17.863%) Rates are offered 3 days prior and 3 days post reunion based on availability.

Cut off Date: 9/15/2019

Cancellation Policy: All reservations have a 48 hour cancellation policy, or attendee will be charged one night room rate plus tax.

WHEELCHAIR RENTALS

ScootAround: (888)441-7575 or ScootAround.com

HOSPITALITY SUITES

This year, the 8th AFHS is pleased to announce that we are again offering **HOSPITALITY SUITES** to groups at **NO CHARGE**. The number of suites is limited, so we ask that you reserve your suite as soon as possible. Suites are located in close proximity to one another and most are large enough for two or more groups to share space.

In order to guarantee your suite,
please call or email ASAP:

Debra Kujawa
Managing Director
912-748-8884

ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org



45th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO
October 16-20, 2019

Wednesday, October 16

1:00pm — 6:00pm
6:00pm — 7:00pm
7:00pm — 9:00pm
7:00pm — until

Reunion Registration open

Complimentary Welcome Reception, followed by dinner on your own

8th AFHS Board Meeting

Hospitality Suites remain open throughout reunion

Thursday, October 17

7:30am — 8:30am
8:00am — 12:00pm
9:00am — 2:00pm
1:00pm — 6:00pm
2:15pm — 3:00pm
3:15pm — 5:00pm
6:00pm — 9:00pm
7:00pm — 9:00pm

Breakfast

Reunion Registration open

Sights of St. Louis (City Tour)*

Reunion Registration open

Curator's Corner

"Researching the Past: Step-by-Step"— David Schmitt, Lane Callaway, & others

Cash Bar Open

Buffet dinner and program: **"Op Frantic"& Mission Update**, Lane Callaway

Friday, October 18

7:30am — 8:30am
8:00am — 12:00pm
8:00am — 9:15am
9:30am — 1:30pm
1:00pm — 6:00pm
1:45pm — 3:00pm
3:15pm — 4:30pm
6:00pm — 9:00pm
7:00pm — 9:00pm

Breakfast

Reunion Registration open

Group Meetings

Keep the Memory Alive Tour (includes Holocaust Museum)*

Reunion Registration open

Historical Presentation: "Eighth Airfields as Wartime Homes"

Q&AWWII Vets

Cash Bar Open

Rendezvous Dinners

Saturday, October 19

7:30am — 8:30am
8:00am — 12:00pm
8:45am — 10:15am
12:00pm — 4:00pm
12:00pm — 4:00pm
1:00pm — 6:00pm
6:00pm — 9:00pm
7:00pm — 10:00pm

Breakfast

Reunion Registration open

General Membership Meeting

8th AFHS Board Meeting

Sights and Shops in St. Charles Tour*

Reunion Registration open

Cash Bar Open

Gala Dinner and Program

Sunday, October 20

7:30am — 8:30am

Breakfast

***It is important that you be in the bus boarding area
at least ten [10] minutes prior to the scheduled departure times.
All tours require a minimum of 45 participants, unless otherwise stated.
Driver and Staff gratuities ARE included in the tour prices.**



REGISTRATION FORM
45th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION
Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO
October 16-20, 2019

CUT-OFF DATE IS September 25, 2019	Price p/p	# of People	TOTAL
DUES			
The principal attendee <i>MUST</i> be a member of the 8th AFHS to register for this reunion. If you are NOT a CURRENT member, please pay your yearly dues here:	\$40	#	\$
REGISTRATION FEE			
Includes meeting expenses and other reunion expenses.	\$45	#	\$
Registration fee for children ages 8-16 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel:	\$30	#	\$
BREAKFAST BUFFET (please indicate below and place totals to the right)			
Please indicate [X] which days you would like buffet breakfast and quantity: Thursday <u> </u> <i>tt</i> <u> </u> Friday <u> </u> <i>#</i> <u> </u> Saturday <u> </u> <i>#</i> <u> </u> Sunday <u> </u> <i>tt</i> <u> </u>	Price per breakfast: \$23	Total # of breakfasts: <i>tt</i>	\$
DINNERS			
Thursday, Oct 17 — EVENING DINNER BUFFET Roasted Pork Loin & Grilled Chicken Breast	\$48	<i>it</i>	\$
Friday, Oct 18—RENDEZVOUS DINNER Chicken Marsala	\$48	<i>tt</i>	\$
Saturday, Oct 19—GALA BANQUET (Please select entree)*			
Sliced London Broil with Bordelaise Sauce	\$48	<i>it</i>	\$
Pan Seared Salmon with Balsamic Reduction	\$48	#	\$
Vegetarian plate(s) Please indicate [X]: Thurs <u> </u> <i>#</i> <u> </u> Fri <u> </u> <i>#</i> <u> </u> Sat <u> </u> <i>#</i> <u> </u>	\$48	<i>it</i>	\$
TOUR OPTIONS:			
Thursday, Oct 17: Sights of St. Louis Tour-INCLUDES BOX LUNCH	\$ 65	<i>tt</i>	\$
Friday, Oct 18: Keep the Memory Alive Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 26	<i>tt</i>	\$
Saturday, Oct 19: Sights and Shops in St. Charles Tour—Lunch on your own	\$26	<i>tt</i>	\$
Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS			\$

Please PRINT. If registering a WWII veteran here, please list their name first.

MEMBER NAME (for name tag): _____

WWII VeteranBG/FG Affiliation (for Rendezvous Dinner seating):POW: (Korea, Vietnam, etc.):

SPOUSE or PERSON attending: _____

ADDITIONAL AL GU ESTS:

ADDRESS:CITY:STATE:ZIP:

DAYTIME PH #:EMAIL: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT:PH #:

PLEASE INDICATE ANY PHYSICAL OR DIETARY RESTRICTIONS:

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD —M/C; VISA; or AmEx (*a 3% convenience fee will be added*):

CARD #:EXP. DATE:

SIGNATURE: *Your contact information will only be shared with attendees.*

MAIL completed form with check or credit card info to: 8th AFHS ~ 68 Kimberlys Way ~ Jasper, GA 30143-4769



Featured Pin-Up Artist - Bill Ward (1919-1998)

(Caption - Left):

"Sarge, we *don't* have to arrest her as soon as she gets in, do we?"

Imagine an innocent but stunning young woman boasting Barbie like proportions poured into a wisp of lingerie or a clingy cocktail dress with silky opera-length gloves and sheer thigh-high stockings ... take all that and picture it perched atop a pair of dangerously high stiletto heels.

Bill Ward is probably the best pin-up cartoon artist you've never heard of. What's amazing about this assertion is that when he passed away in 1998, he left behind a body of work that spanned six decades and by all accounts, more than 10,000 pin-up illustrations. But while some of Ward's contemporaries were making names for themselves in mainstream publications, Ward's exquisite pin-up cartoons were buried in the pages countless cheap, but long forgotten, men's and humor magazines.

In fact, Ward is probably better known for his comic book work dating back the 1940s and 1950s. Ward penciled thousands of pages - an output rivaled by only handful of comic book artists - for books ranging from Captain Marvel and Black his own Golden Age creation, Torchy, Ward's original glamour girl. Though Torchy had a proclivity for shedding her clothing and revealing her racy undergarments, which was considered quite provocative for her time, Ward's shapely but oh-so innocent blonde bombshell was just a precursor of things to come.

With the 1954 publication of Dr. Fredric Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* presaging the contraction of comics in the 1950s, Ward capitalized on his ability to render the female form and moved seamlessly into the world of cartoon pinups. Ward's strongest work was created between 1957 and 1963 for the Humorama line of digest magazines, where his voluptuous "girly" drawings shared the pages with photos of Bettie Page and pin-up cartoons by the likes of Archie's Dan DeCarlo and Playboy magazine's Jack Cole.

Thumbing through those digests, it quickly becomes evident that Ward was Humorama's dominant pin-up cartoon artist. But while Ward's images were often accompanied by corny captions, calling them cartoons is something of a misnomer.

What set Ward apart from his talented contemporaries - including Cole - was his ability to master a medium called the Conte crayon. When drawn on simple newsprint stock paper, this potent combination created a charcoal-like effect and colour that allowed Ward to produce unparalleled textures, including the wonderful sheen on black thigh-high stockings that became a Ward trademark.

Sometimes bawdy, but never tawdry, Ward's top-heavy Humorama women still managed to maintain the allure, innocence and most importantly, the glamour that made Torchy so popular.

Biographical extract by Alex Chun from "The Glamour Girls of Bill Ward"

TRAIL OF THE "LONESOME POLECAT."

AN ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED ON OUR MISSION OF MARCH 1G, 1944 RY S/
SGT. LOUIS R. LIENING - RIGHT WAIST GUNNER WITH MEYER CREW ON 42-38 IGO
"LONESOME POLECAT"

We were up early that morning about 0230. We caught the trucks for the mess hall and ate the usual chow, two fried eggs, hot cereal, fruit juice and coffee. Then on down to briefing where everyone was in a hurry and buzzing around as usual.

When all were in and seated, the S-2 Officer uncovered the map; all expected another trip to the "Big B." Instead, there was that long black tape reaching from England all the way across Northern France into the Southwestern part of Germany to the Target, "Augsburg", a Messerschmitt assembly plant. It was obviously a long haul. Briefed nine hours, seven on oxygen, five over enemy territory.

Our Group was flying lead group in lead Combat Wing which meant we were leading the entire Eighth Air Force over the target that day. We would be flying at 21,000 feet, temperature forecast to be minus 30 degrees.

We were to have fighter cover all the way out. P-47 (Thunderbolts), P-51 (Mustangs) and P-38 (Lightnings). Flak as always but the navigator should take us around most of it.

After the briefing we went to the Armament shop to check over the guns and from there out to the ships to install them. The ship "Lonesome Polecat" (#160) was brand new and had never flown a mission. After we finished our work we went to the mechanics tent to put on our heated suits.

The weather at take-off time was as normal: All fogged up. We made a Buncher assembly at about 13,000 feet.

All went well as we reached the French coast. We were flying over a solid cloud cover, only a peek at the ground now and then. We picked up our first P-47 escort almost on time. Saw a few enemy fighters in the distance, but none came in.

About an hour and a half past the zero hour, we began to pick up enemy fighters in good numbers. Then all hell broke loose. They caught us between change of escorts. Someone called out attacks on the low group.

Our orders were to hit the target. Jerries' must have been to stop us at any cost. They hit us on first attack and hit us good. They came in head-on through our formation, between 25 and 40 planes.

Plane on our right wing went straight down, must have blown up below us, because we never saw him again.

Jerry got us in several places. Blew out the entire plexiglass nose, injuring the Bombardier in the left foot, put a hole in #2 main tank, direct hit on #4 engine which knocked it out almost immediately, tore holes in the left Bombay door and a direct hit on the Ball Turret which shot the door off and injured the Ball Gunner (S/Sgt. Page) in the right thigh (very bad wound) and in the left shin where some fragments lodged. The attack put both the chin and ball turret out of action. The wounded men were placed in the radio room.

The Navigator's charts and log were lost through the nose. The blast of air from the hole in the nose was so strong and cold, it was soon necessary for the Navigator to go to the radio room.

Meanwhile we were still holding formation but 2500 RPM and 45 inches of manifold pressure on three engines just wouldn't do it. We dove to the low group thinking we could stay with them.

We stayed with them for 15 minutes but the drag caused by the nose being blown off and #4 wind-milling (it wouldn't feather) was just too much. Our best airspeed was about 120 MPH.

Electronic Superchargers were giving trouble too, they wouldn't synchronize sometimes surging to 62 inches individually.

The Engineer started firing green flares and we started throwing things overboard. Bomb Bay doors wouldn't open by motor so the Engineer cranked them down by hand and toggled the bombs out. Doors wouldn't close either by motor or crank.

Tried to salvo the ball turret but the tool broke while trying to release it. Radio was out so we threw it overboard.

By now we were down to 13,000 feet still above the overcast but could see the Alps off to our right. Our airspeed was 100 MPH and #4 was vibrating dangerously.

Switzerland was about our only change so we took a magnetic heading of 190 degrees.

Shortly after we headed for Switzerland the vibration from #4 prop became so great it shook the ship like a leaf on a tree. Finally it came off and went spinning up, over and behind us.

About this time we lost all power from #1 engine. Prop wouldn't feather - evidently it was burned up while trying to hold formation. #2 tank was getting low. The Engineer had to transfer fuel.

About this time we spotted fighters off our wing. They looked like ME-109s but were firing flares. We acknowledged with flares and they came in close. It was then we saw the Swiss markings (White Cross on Red background).

They signaled us to follow them and we did for a while, but were losing altitude so fast we couldn't clear the peaks, so we couldn't make it to the field at Zurich.

So the bail out signal was given at about 1,000 feet. We were in a valley and could see a couple of villages and a large lake.

All the Gunners went out the main escape door including the Navigator. The Co-Pilot went out through the bomb bay. We didn't delay opening our chutes because we knew there was no room to spare, just a few swings and we were on the ground.

We were picked up by the Swiss soldiers and taken to the Swiss Army Headquarters in Baar. While here, we learned that the wounded men had been taken to a hospital, also that the Navigator (Lt. Williams) had died from injuries he received from the jump.

We learned too that Lt. Meyers had ditched the ship in the lake and had escaped uninjured. We were treated well by the Swiss. They fed us, gave us cigarettes, drinks and all they could possibly do to keep us comfortable.

Translation from an article appearing in the March 17, 1944 edition of the Zegerbieter Daily Paper published in Zug, Switzerland:

An American Bomber Crashes Into The Lake Of Zug Crew Saved

Yesterday (Thursday) just before mid-day an airplane was heard flying rather slowly and not very high westward. A few minutes later at exactly 12:15 the sirens were heard. At about 12:45 the plane was heard again coming from the southwest. The sky was clear and soon one could notice an American Bomber accompanied by two little Swiss planes one to the right, the other to the left of the Bomber.

Surely the Swiss planes wanted to lead the Great one to Dubendorf landing field, but the pilot kept on turning the Bomber above the village. Having made half the turn something glittered in the air, it got longer and longer and as it opened one could recognize it as a parachute. A second one, a third one, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth and a seventh one, after that it seemed as if a black ball fell from the plane. With great anxiety, people could see that it was a man whose parachute did not open. About ten meters from the earth the umbrella opened and it luckily stopped the heavy fall a little. A ninth parachute jumped in the air and so the eight men went slowly to the

earth. The first one landed in a tree the second one near the "Sennwind" with the third one beside. Another one got to sit on the roof of a barn belonging to the Haushier family. He smashed a few bricks from the roof, all the men landed more or less well. The machine was still in the air it was certain that the pilot searched for a landing place probably a water landing. He did so then and crashed into the Lake of Zug. Before the plane sank the last man was seen jumping into the lake as there was enough row boats about he was soon taken aboard.

One man of the crew was heavily wounded by the fall but also during the Bombardment of Augsburg. Later on another member of the crew was taken to the hospital. He had to be operated on. His life was in danger. A third man was also taken to the hospital.

The men of the crew seemed to be from 20-26 years of age. The six soldiers were boarded at the Lindenhof later the Pilot in Chief joined the rest of the crew. A First Lt. 26 years of age, he was heard called Maier (Meyer). The Pilot was wet to the skin. The munitions which were thrown off the Bomber before its landing were also brought in.

Some of the inhabitants of the village tried to shoot at the parachutists, it was rather up to date, but the crew seemed to know that they were in Switzerland.

Men on board the "Lonesome Polecat" listed in the order which they bailed out and where they landed in Baar.

S/Sgt. Louis B. Liening (Right Waist Gunner) - in an orchard

T/Sgt. Carl J. Larsen (Togglier) - in an orchard

S/Sgt. Charles W. Page (Ball Gunner) - in a front yard

S/Sgt. Jerrell F. Legg (Tail Gunner) - on a railroad track

S/Sgt. Elbert E. Mitchell (Left Waist Gunner) - on a house

S/Sgt. John Miller, Jr. (Engineer) - on a house

T/Sgt. John E. Wells (Radio Operator) - in a front yard

2nd Lt. Robert L. Williams (Navigator) - killed during jump

2nd Lt. Boyd J. Henshaw (Co-Pilot) - open field

1st Lt. Robert W. Meyer (Pilot) - ditched ship in Lake Zug

INTRODUCING - A CREW AND OUR PRESIDENT

BY BOB SILVER

The other day, I was talking on the phone with our Vice President, Susan (Stern) Fineman, and I told her of an incident that she felt would be of interest to many others...so here it is:

This "incident" really had its beginning 75 years ago, in June of 1944, when I had completed "Transition Training" in the B-17 after having finished Aviation Cadet training in the class of "44-C" at Blytheville, Arkansas in March. I was then transferred to Ardmore, Oklahoma for "Crew Training". When I first read my orders I had no idea where Ardmore was located. It turned out to be straight South of Oklahoma City, about 20 miles from the border of Texas. I do not recall how I was first introduced to the others who would be members of this newly-formed "crew". I am sure that there was no procedure or ceremony; it was all just a matter of paper-work. Among the nine members of his group was one who was assigned to be the Co-pilot; his name was Michael R. Gallagher.

The "training" at Ardmore consisted of just the fundamental basics of flight in a B-17: take-offs, landings, formation flying, etc. One day—at a meeting of all of the newly-formed "crews" we were informed that the activity for the day would be a "Cross -Country Flight" involving night-time navigation. For our crew the assignment was to fly non-stop to Phoenix, Arizona and return to Ardmore. The briefing officer had said that a cross-country flight would be an excellent time to put into practice one of the fundamentals of B-17 flight: Being certain that each crew member could perform not only his own assigned duties but also had the ability to "fill in" at another position in the event of an emergency.

We made our take-off as scheduled at about 5:00 in the late afternoon; it was a beautiful afternoon in early June. After a short time, we reached our flight altitude and the crew members were free to move around. I had chosen that time to ask our radio operator to give some instruction to the ball-turret gunner on emergency radio procedures if they should ever be needed. I went to the radio operator's position to assist in that process. Suddenly there was a very loud "BANG" and the aircraft shuddered...I thought that an engine had exploded. I ran up through the bomb-bay to get to my position on the flight deck and to get my parachute if needed. We always wore a parachute-harness that consisted of very heavy straps of fabric with metal loops on each side of the chest area where the parachute could be hooked on when and if needed. Some of the crew members were looking out of various windows at the beautiful country -side and

the bombardier had been in my seat when the BIG BANG had occurred. The co-pilot quickly showed me the view out of the right window. Where the wing-tip should be there was flapping metal! He explained that an aircraft had run into us and was no longer in sight. After taking control of the plane, I gave radio instructions to the crew members about what had happened and gave them permission to bail out if they chose to do so. The co-pilot suggested that we get enough altitude to practice landing stalls to see how the wing would perform if and when we tried to land. After putting down our landing gear and performing a couple of mid-air "landings", we contacted a near-by airfield we had just passed. It was an army air-corps bombardier training base at Big Springs, Texas. They already knew about the collision because it had been a plane from their field that had been involved. We got permission for an emergency landing and I was able to make a very smooth landing...one of the best of my career. This fact was later acknowledged by almost every member of the crew!

For me, personally, the most memorable aspect of that landing was that we were accompanied by fire-trucks and ambulances running along-side the runway as we landed! Fortunately, those were not needed. The next "most memorable" aspect of that experience would be that in the years after the war ended our co-pilot, Michael R. Gallagher would be named President of the 385th Bomb Group Association.

PS-----In 1945, when we were on active duty in England, I was promoted to Assistant Squadron Commander flying bombing missions as Squadron Command Pilot and Mike Gallagher became First Pilot of the crew.



Silver Crew

Front Row (R-L):

Michael R. Gallagher -
Co-Pilot and Future 385th
BGA President; Sylvan
Lieberthal - Bombardier;
Bob Silver - Pilot; Roger
Oates - Navigator

Back Row (R-L):

Arnold Willingham - Ball
Turret; George Sawyer -
Waist Gunner; Dick Bur-
khardt - Radio Operator;
Jim Dacey - Tail Gunner;
Mike Kindya - Top Turret/
Engineer; Jack Hannah -
Waist Gunner

Here's the second entry in Bob Stevens' new illustrated dictionary for aviation buffs (the first entry appeared in AF/SD for September '68). Send in your favorite old AF term — it might be worth five bucks... (Offer expired March 1969, Ed.)

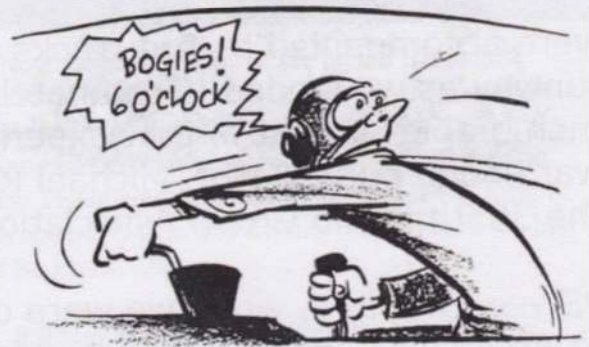
AIRMEN'S UNABRIDGED DICTIONARY



CLANK UP (verb) State of extreme agitation. Usually brought on by such statements as "overseas, Special mission, check ride, the C.O. wants to see you..." etc.

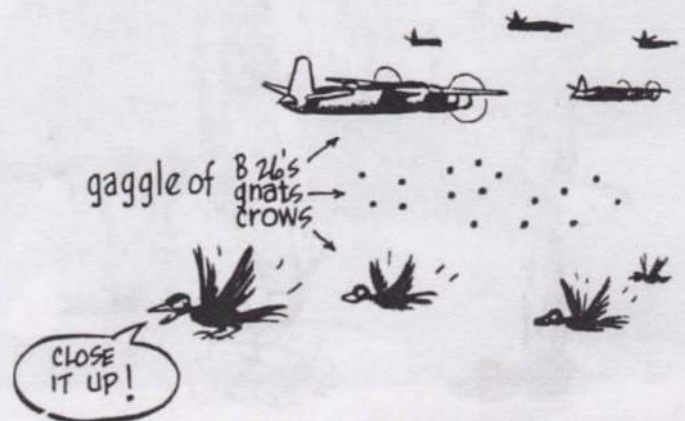
FIREWALL (verb and noun)

(i) Act of pulling 6s in. of manifold, pressure from an engine designed to give only 50. (?) section of the aircraft specially designed to allow all engine heat and smohz to fill the cockpit.



FIGMO (acronym) Quaint old Anglo-Saxon expression used, by "short-timers" to tell the neophytes what to do. Stands for "-----, I Got My Orders", (no polite form)

GAG GLE (noun) A large number of anything headed in the same general direction in the same part of the sky. Often used to describe a USAAF tight formation.





"Lonesome Polecat" reconstructed at St Moritz ca 1972 - unfortunately, this plane has since been destroyed.



BEFORE YOU RECYCLE THIS NEWSLETTER...

Please consider donating it to your local School, VFW, or American Legion.

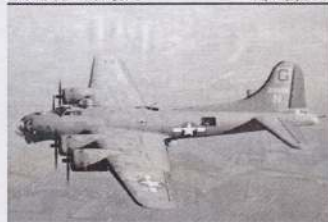


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